DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 468 182 EA 031 853

AUTHOR	Raphael, Jacqueline; Anderson, Alissa
TITLE	The Public Education Network Study of LEF Leadership: Report on Baseline Survey Findings.
INSTITUTION	Urban Inst., Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2001-10-17
NOTE	50p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Administrator Behavior; *Community Leaders; Educational Finance; Elementary Secondary Education; Leadership Qualities; *Leadership Styles; National Surveys; *Nonprofit Organizations; *Private Financial Support
IDENTIFIERS	*Local Education Funds

ABSTRACT

A study examined how nonprofit organizations, particularly local education funds, and their leaders address social issues. Local education funds are a set of voluntary, intermediate, and mission-driven organizations at the center of educational and civic capacity building. This report provides the results of the first phase of the Public Education Network leadership study of 59 LEF executive directors, portraying their characteristics and perceptions. Survey items were formulated by Urban Institute researchers, examined by experts inside and outside the network, and pilot-tested using current and former Los Angeles executive directors. Judging from the survey, executive directors would prefer to spend less time carrying out management of programs and more time on strategic planning. Interpersonal skills and strategic planning were ranked as key to effective leadership. A community-collaborative model of leadership was preferred because interacting with and mobilizing the community is an integral role. That executive directors tend to be white and middle-income, whereas students in the districts served tend to be lower income, is a concern. The majority believe their boards of directors are executing their responsibilities effectively. (Contains 20 references.) (RKJ)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 468 182

The Public Education Network Study of LEF Leadership: Report on Baseline Survey Findings

October 17, 2001

Jacqueline Raphael
Jraphael@ui.urban.org
Alissa Anderson
Aanderso@ui.urban.org

The Urban Institute
2100 M Street NW
Washington, DC 20037

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S. Brown

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

EA 031 853

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS 2

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 3

INTRODUCTION 6

OVERVIEW OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS STUDY 6

BRIEF REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE 7

METHODS 9

The Full Study 9
The Baseline Survey 10

BASELINE SURVEY FINDINGS 11

LEF Leadership and Community Demographic Characteristics 11
Table 1: Executive Director Demographics by Tenure 11
Table 2: Characteristics of Students Served by LEFs 12
Table 3: Executive Director Demographics 12
Table 4: Boards of Directors' Demographics 13
Table 5: Perception of Board of Directors 13
LEF Executive Director Activities and Skills 14
Table 6: Executive Directors' Time Allocation 14
Table 7: Executive Directors' Time Allocation by Tenure 15
Table 8: Perception of Importance of Leadership Skills 17
Internal Organizational Issues 17
Table 9: Average Hours Executive Directors Work per Week 18
Table 10: Perceptions of Staff 19
Figure 1: Executive Directors' Characterization of Their Boards 20
LEF Executive Directors as Community Collaborators 20
Figure 2: Frequency with which Executive Directors Talk with the Following Groups 22
Figure 3: Similarity of Vision of Education 23
Figure 4: LEF is "Critical Friend" of District 23

CONCLUSIONS 23

Implications for Civic Capacity Building 24
Implications for Leadership Development 25
Questions for Further Consideration 26

BIBLIOGRAPHY 28

APPENDIX A: Survey Instrument 30
APPENDIX B: Survey Findings 41

The Public Education Network Study of LEF Leadership:
Report on Baseline Survey Findings

Executive Summary

Importance of Study

Many nonprofit organizations seek to make change. To that end, much needed "capital" -- variously described as social, public, professional, and human — is being brought to bear upon pressing social issues. Researchers across the country are attempting to understand how these resources are being generated, deployed, and administered, and to what avail. Of particular interest here are local education funds (LEFs) and their leaders. LEFs are a set of voluntary, intermediate, and mission-driven organizations, conceived by the Ford Foundation in 1983, which sit strategically at the nexus of educational and civic capacity building.

This report provides the results of the first phase of the Public Education Network (PEN) leadership study, a baseline survey administered to 59 LEF executive directors. The survey had two purposes: to provide a snapshot of leadership characteristics and perceptions of executive directors — information never before compiled and examined — and to gather contextual information on the LEFs and the communities they serve. The results will be used as a foundation for subsequent research on LEF leadership. In time, the findings from this research will assist PEN in its efforts to nurture and sustain LEF leadership.

This survey, and subsequent study components, will build on already conducted research by, for example, Elizabeth Useem, from within PEN, and Steven Ott, Burt Nanus, and others from without. It will also provide a fresh source of data for community leadership and change researchers such as Richard Harwood and David Chrislip, and help inform the practices of other organizations undertaking a change agenda.

Methods

Survey items were formulated by Urban Institute researchers, examined by experts inside and outside the PEN network to maximize study validity, and pilot-tested with current and former LEF executive directors. The resulting survey was administered between June 4 and July 4, 2001 and generated a 75 percent response rate.

Future components of the study will involve a more comprehensive exploration of LEF leadership through facilitated discussions with founding directors, new directors, and directors of long-standing LEFs; semi-structured interviews with founding executive directors and key informants; and a follow-up survey of all executive directors.

Baseline Survey Findings

The baseline survey revealed a number of interesting findings about executive directors' work and characteristics, as well as their perceptions of important leadership skills. These include the following:

- If executive directors had total control over their time allocation, most would continue to concentrate on program development and district relations. However, they would *spend less time carrying out the actual management of programs and focus more time on strategic planning.*

- Most frequently respondents *ranked interpersonal skills and strategic planning as key to effective LEF leadership.*

- This first glimpse suggests that *LEF executive director leadership can be best described by a community collaborative model of leadership* because interacting with and mobilizing the community is viewed an integral role of the executive director.

- Differences surfaced in the background and experience of newer executive directors — those who have held their position for four years or less — and longer-term executive directors. *Newer executive directors are more likely to have a higher level of educational attainment, have previous experience in education, and are less likely to live in the community served by their LEF.*

- Nearly all respondents indicated *a high level of satisfaction with their job and their compensation* — this despite reports of very high numbers of hours dedicated to their work.

- There is a disparity between the characteristics of LEF leaders and the communities they serve. *While executive directors tend to be white and middle-income, the students in the districts served by the LEFs tend to be lower-income and non-white.*

- The majority of executive directors feel *their boards of directors are executing their responsibilities effectively.* For instance, 93 percent report that their board ensures that the LEF stays true to and advances its mission.

Study Implications

Implications of these findings for civic community building and leadership development are summarized in the conclusion section of the full report, as are areas for further study. Salient implications include the following

- LEF leadership is likely to be a strong factor in the development of public capital. LEFs and their leaders can contribute to almost all of the nine factors identified by Richard

Harwood (1996) as part of public capital, particularly as catalytic organizations with strong leadership, that promote informal networks and links and greater community discussion.

- Although racial and ethnic homogeneity is a common problem among nonprofits, it may be particularly important for LEFs and PEN to address, as LEFs claim to represent a public community response to the need for better schools.

- PEN and LEFs will want to consider the systematic differences among new and longer-term executive directors when thinking about how to nurture LEF leadership.

- Some evidence pointed to a need on the part of executive directors for increased understanding of how to develop a board's autonomy. Generally, an important aspect of LEF leadership will continue to be the executive director's ability to work effectively with his or her board.

Clearly, important questions for further inquiry and informal and formal discussion arise from the above findings and implications. Among them:

- *What factors cause executive directors to spend more time than desired on program management, and less time than desired on strategic planning?*

- *What exactly do executive directors mean when they say they want to spend much more time on strategic planning, especially at a time when nonprofits are being called to divert so much time and expertise to the process?*

- *What are some of the implications, for inter-LEF and community collaboration, of multiple LEFs and executive directors in one community?*

This study provides important baseline information about LEF executive directors. Follow-up research is planned to yield valuable practical information about LEF leadership. The study is expected to generate rich discussion among all stakeholders, including LEF board and staff members, PEN, and other community leaders.

The Public Education Network Study of LEF Leadership: Report on Baseline Survey Findings

Introduction

Local education funds (LEFs) are nonprofit, independent, community-based school reform organizations that seek to improve student achievement for all children through partnerships with local school districts. LEFs marshal resources, broker relationships, and fund or provide services to schools and school districts. The Public Education Network (PEN), the nation's largest network of such organizations, addresses these same goals through national advocacy (often through groups of LEFs) for systemic change in education, increased public involvement in reform, and direct support and technical assistance to member LEFs.

LEFs were established throughout the country starting in the mid 1980s to catalyze school reforms aimed at supporting disadvantaged children in public schools. Since their inception, LEFs have raised over $1 billion for public schools. A seed grant from the Ford Foundation in 1983 helped to establish a group of LEFs that belonged to the Public Education Fund (now the Public Education Network). Currently, 60 such LEFs are part of PEN. Over the years, LEFs have shifted from a primarily "charitable" or service approach — providing funds and services to schools and school districts — to an advocacy approach of engaging key community stakeholders in the reform process.

Overview of the Importance of this Study

This study of LEF leadership will contribute to several broad areas of research. First, the study's focus on leadership of LEFs — and particularly, the executive director's role in the LEF's work — will contribute to an understanding of how individuals shape the work of community-based nonprofit organizations. Key features of this leadership include the collaboration with community (e.g., devising ways to engage and mobilize the public, and to work effectively with the school district system), as well as the internal management of LEF staff and board to ensure fiscal soundness, sustainability, and effectiveness. LEF executive directors must manage in ways that complement the strengths of other individuals who participate in the LEF, including the board of directors and other LEF staff members. In 1999, Elizabeth Useem underscored that the future success of LEFs depends in part on increasing LEFs' capacity to overcome organizational challenges. This study ought to provide information that will be of practical use to PEN as it considers ways to help its member LEFs to address these challenges.

The second area of research is school reform, which encompasses an expanding role for the public. Key federal education legislation, including the Goals 2000: Educate America Act and 1994 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, require community participation in the development of statewide and local strategic plans for education reform. These plans have as their goal mastery of challenging academic standards by *all* students. In addition, federal requirements have made the public a consumer of accountability information, with the expectation that public reporting will serve as a lever to affect school improvement. Vouchers

and other parental choice options have also expanded the role of the community in school improvement.

By mediating between the school district, the primary local education policymaking institution, and the community it serves, LEFs are truly *intermediary* organizations, and their role as such in education reform is the third area of research to which this study will contribute. In a qualitative study of intermediary organizations in Oakland, California, Honig (2001) suggested that third-party organizations can provide needed support to school sites implementing new programs, support that policymakers and complex school district bureaucracies are unable to provide. Intermediary organizations can help policymaking bodies to better understand and facilitate implementation of reform.

Finally, this study overlaps with the growing research on community building. LEFs are locally focused efforts that unite citizens to improve the lives of families. The issues involved in mobilizing the public to solve its own problems are critical to the work accomplished by LEFs. Community building also brings various approaches to the change process, including community organizing and community economic development. LEFs that seek to catalyze education reform through community building participate in a collaborative process of developing local leadership and creating coalitions. LEFs are not merely an "arm" of the local school district.

Brief Review of the Literature

Little is known about LEF leadership over the last fifteen years. Elizabeth Useem (1999) identifies several conditions for the success of an LEF, including a productive working relationship with the school district, an alignment between the district's and the LEF's vision for reform, the involvement of business in the LEF, the availability of resources, and the administrative skill of the LEF's board and executive director. Of particular importance, she suggested, was the need to implement an overall LEF strategy that has the "broadest long-term impact on educational practices" - true systemic reform. Such a strategy must find a balance between a narrow focus on a few key areas, and a broader focus on many areas, to maximize opportunity (Useem, 1999, 25-26). The executive director of an LEF plays a key role in identifying and pursuing a balanced organizational focus.

A 1987 evaluation of the Public Education Fund (a precursor to the Public Education Network) includes a discussion of LEF staffing and governance (Haas, et al.). Executive directors are described as a fairly homogenous group -- predominantly white, female, and well-educated, with a strong commitment to civic and social activism in education reform. Executive directors were also prime candidates for "burnout": they frequently reported feeling they lacked sufficient time to accomplish their goals. The rate of turnover appeared to be on the rise. These conditions may well have changed. It will be important to assess the stability and job satisfaction of current LEF executive directors.

The 1987 evaluation also explored executive directors' views on the involvement of their LEF board of directors in key LEF areas. In general, these views indicated that the boards'

involvement was decreasing, and that this shift could well be a sign of the healthy evolution of the LEFs surveyed, with the board evincing greater trust in the capacity of the LEF executive director and staff to accomplish its goals. Researchers will want to pay particular attention to how the development of the LEFs over a longer period of time has affected governance within LEFs.

Nonprofit sector research poses several different scenarios for the construction of organizational leadership. Stephen Block (1998a) notes that the traditional nonprofit governance model is hierarchical, with the executive director subordinate to the board of directors. Yet he cites other researchers who suggest that more often, although the board is legally in control of an organization (the legal and fiduciary role), the executive director is in charge of leading an organization, using his or her skills, and is the entity most directly connected to the organization's success. In fact, a more collegial model is often posited, in which the executive director, through active management, assists board members in fulfilling their roles (Block, 1998b).

A more analytic approach to the nonprofit sector identifies several patterns of governance. The pattern most commonly practiced among nonprofits has the chief executive officer as the primary decision-maker and the board as the key ratifier of decisions (Murray, 1998). The next most common pattern is a board-dominated nonprofit, often found in smaller, younger, more volunteer-driven nonprofits, in which the board develops recommendations and the chief executive officer provides information to inform these decisions. Also common among hospitals and universities is a staff-driven organization, and, in organizations with high levels of self-help and advocacy, a final pattern of collective governance, in which all key stakeholders come to a consensus about decisions, is common.

This study of LEF leadership will elucidate how LEF executive directors effectively connect local resources (donors), public engagement, school system operations, and a wide range of pre-existing strategies, resources, and ideas (including those supported by PEN), as well as negotiate and implement unique partnerships. From executive directors, this demands knowledge, skills, and the ability to work effectively in an "open system," i.e., an organization composed of interdependent parts that interacts with its environment. Because the settings in which LEFs operate vary a great deal, no single set of leadership characteristics and competencies will fully describe the range of LEF directors' requirements. In some settings, political skills will be of the utmost importance; in others, technical skills (e.g., fundraising) will be most critical. An executive director's skill at identifying goals, as well as implementing strategies to achieve them, is necessarily an interaction with the local context.

Many models of leadership are relevant to this study, though these theories do not typically differ in significant ways and are not often based on empirical evidence. Management expert Henry Mitzberg (1973, cited in Block, 1998a 102), organizes the typical executive director skill set into ten roles that fall into three sets of broad behaviors: decisional roles (e.g., resource allocation, negotiator); informational roles (e.g., monitor, spokesperson); and interpersonal roles (e.g., leader, liaison). Nanus and Dobbs (1999) cite the work of Lipman-Blumen (1996), who identifies nine leadership styles. However, Nanus and Dobbs suggest that nonprofit leaders are

likely to use more than one style, or to develop their own. They conceptualize nonprofit leadership in terms of six overlapping roles, including: visionary, strategist, politician, campaigner, coach, and change agent.

Most likely, a model to help understand LEF leadership must encompass more than one particular individual's style and roles. Models for community collaboration provide a useful framework for understanding how an executive director of an LEF might function. This model has been documented anecdotally in ***Collaborative Leadership***, by Chrislip & Larson (1994).

The literature on school restructuring and whole-school reform stresses the critical role that community support and involvement plays in sustaining comprehensive reform (Porter & Osthoof, 1993). A new U.S. Department of Education report (2001) on turning around low-performing schools suggests that "in order to succeed, reform efforts need to be adapted to the needs of the individual school and involve the entire school community." The report also points to the value, to low-performing schools, of external support, including the types of expertise, programming, professional development, and other services supported by LEFs. Parent and community involvement has been repeatedly observed to be a key factor in increasing educational outcomes by numerous researchers including Peterson-del Mar (1994), the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995), and national education laboratories such as the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (2000), which wrote a guide to promoting family and community involvement in school improvement.

Leadership of LEFs is a rich field for future inquiry because it encompasses the involvement of various stakeholders in education reform. LEFs challenge traditional notions about who best represents the interests of the local community. As many different groups outside the school district bureaucracy expand their influence, the literature on interactions with the school boards, teachers' unions, state legislatures, and the public at large will also be relevant to this study.

Methods

The Full Study

This report provides results of a survey that is part of an ongoing systematic study of leadership of LEFs in PEN. In particular, the study focuses on leadership skills and characteristics of executive directors of LEFs.

The purpose of the survey was to identify the skills, characteristics, and behaviors evident in respondents in their capacity as LEF executive directors. The survey provides a snapshot of LEF leadership, including how LEF executive directors spend their time, what skills they perceive are most useful in their leadership role, and what challenges they face in their position. The survey also collected contextual information about executive directors, the LEFs they managed, and the communities they served. Also, the survey asked the respondents to answer questions about their LEFs' purpose, operations, effectiveness, and governance. This information has not been collected by PEN previously. Researchers were also able to link the

data collected with this survey to other previously collected PEN data, to provide richer contextual information for analysis.

This survey will be followed up with a second survey, to the same population of current executive directors, at some time toward the end of the study period. The follow-up survey will address issues raised in other research activities planned for this study. These activities include case studies of seven founding directors of LEFs, and facilitated discussions with executive directors. This first survey was intended to provide baseline information that cuts across all executive directors and can inform the rest of the study.

The full study will include the following strategies:

(1) The use of results of a *baseline survey* administered to all 59 LEF directors as a foundation for the other components of the full research study.
(2) *Facilitated discussions* with founding directors, new directors, and directors of longstanding LEFs to gain a full perspective on the current status of LEF leadership.
(3) *Site visits* to LEFs, to include semi-structured interviews with founding executive directors and key informants, observations of key LEF events, and document review (e.g., board minutes, strategic plans). The visits will explore LEF leadership.
(4) A *follow-up survey* administered to all executive directors.

The Baseline Survey

Survey development began in April, 2001, with a review of existing literature about PEN and LEFs. In addition, the researchers reviewed literature on leadership and organizational management (see bibliography). Finally, extensive discussions with PEN staff helped the research team to understand the broad parameters of LEF operations and the skills exercised by LEF executive directors.

A draft protocol was circulated among other Urban Institute researchers for their review, and PEN staff reviewed the survey. Suggestions from all reviewers were incorporated into the next draft, which was then pilot-tested with four current or recently retired LEF executive directors. Two versions of certain questions were pilot-tested to determine the best approach. Upon completion of pilot-testing and final revisions, the survey was sent again to PEN for final approval.

On June 5, 2001, the researchers mailed the survey to all 59 LEF executive directors, using a list provided by PEN. Several follow-up e-mails were sent to LEF executive directors by PEN and the researchers to make the response rate as high as possible. By July 4, the closing date, 44 surveys had been received, a response rate of 75 percent. This response rate was deemed sufficient to allow us to generalize about the universe of LEF executive directors. Two surveys, filled out by interim or acting directors, were discarded, as agreed to by PEN and the research team.

The researchers' primary interest in analyzing these data was to describe the entire LEF executive director population. To analyze these data, researchers ran descriptive statistics (e.g., measures of central tendency) and cross-tabulations. More sophisticated analyses were not run due to the small sample size. The researchers measured relationships' significance levels, but rarely were the results statistically significant. (Statistically significant results are indicated as such in the report.)

Baseline Survey Findings

LEF Leadership and Community Demographic Characteristics

Findings from this survey reveal that as in 1987, executive directors of LEFs continue to be predominantly white, middle-aged females. Twenty-six percent of newer executive directors, defined as those who have held their position for four years or less, are male compared to none of the longer-standing directors (see Table 1). Yet the racial and ethnic composition of directors has essentially remained constant.[1]

Table 1: Executive Director Demographics by Tenure

ED Characteristics	*Overall*	*Newer*	*Longer-term*
Female	88%	74%	100%
White	85%	84%	86%
African-American	7%	11%	5%

According to data collected by PEN, the districts served by the LEFs in our sample tend to have high percentages of non-white and lower-income students (see Table 2).[2] On average the LEFs serve districts in which 52 percent of the student body is non-white and 50 percent are eligible for the federally funded reduced-price lunch program. Assuming that characteristics of students in these districts serve as a proxy for the wider communities' characteristics, executive directors typically differ from the communities they serve both in terms of ethnic/racial background and socioeconomic class.[3] Given that interaction with the community is essential to the executive director's role, demographic differences between LEF leaders and their communities is an issue worth exploring in subsequent aspects of this study.

---

[1] EDs were divided into two categories, "newer" and "longer-term," based upon the sample distribution of ED tenure. The median number of years EDs have held their position is four years. The gender differences by ED tenure are statistically significant at the .05 level however racial/ethnic differences are not statistically significant.

[2] Low-income status is based on percent receiving free or reduced price lunch.

[3] White EDs are more likely than non-white EDs to lead LEFs serving districts with higher percentages of non-white students. However it should be noted that the number of minority EDs in the sample is very small and that this relationship is not statistically significant.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 2: Characteristics of Students Served by LEFs

Student Characteristics	*Mean*	*Minimum*	*Maximum*
Number of students	110,000	2,000	800,000
Non-white students*	52%	0%	93%
Free or reduced lunch*	50%	17%	75%
Student-teacher ratio*	17:1	14:1	25:1

*PEN data

Although demographically, newer executive directors look much like longer-term directors, a number of distinct differences in experience and background exist between these groups (see Table 3). Almost half of all newer executive directors hold Ph.D.s compared to only 14 percent of longer-term EDs. In addition, 70 percent of newer executive directors have previous work experience in the field of education compared to less than half of longer-term EDs. These numbers are reversed for previous work in nonprofits, where 76 percent of longer-term executive directors compared to 55 percent of newer executive directors have experience. Newer directors are also less likely than their longer-term counterparts to live in the community served by their LEF.[4]

Table 3: Executive Director Demographics

ED Characteristics	*Overall*	*Newer*	*Longer-term*
B.A.	32%	21%	43%
M.A.	32%	31%	33%
Ph.D.	32%	47%	14%
Education experience	60%	70%	48%
Non-profit experience	67%	55%	76%
Live in community	76%	68%	81%
Yrs. in community (mean)	32	29	34

Because boards of directors are a critical part of LEF leadership, it is important to understand how board demographics compare to those of the community and, further, how executive directors use their boards to connect to the community. According to PEN data, LEFs in our sample serving districts with higher percentages of students of color are more likely to be

[4] None of these differences are statistically significant.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

governed by boards with larger proportions of people of color.[5] However, on average, members of the boards are a relatively homogenous group of people (see Table 4). The average board of directors of LEFs in our sample is composed of 24 people, 63 percent of whom are male and 78 percent of whom are white.[6] The baseline survey revealed that only 57 percent of the executive directors in our study agree that their board of directors has ensured its representativeness of the community it serves, while highly rating their boards in other areas (see Table 5). Thus, in general, the mismatch between LEF leadership and the community served by the organization extends beyond the executive director to include the boards of directors.

Table 4: Boards of Directors' Demographics

	Mean	*Minimum*	*Maximum*
Total board members*	24	11	45
Female board members*	9	1	17
Male board members*	15	0	32
White board members*	19	1	41

*Pen data

Table 5: Perception of Board of Directors

	Strongly agree	*Agree*	*Neutral*	*Disagree*	*Strongly disagree*
a. Board ensures LEF stays true to and advances mission	41%	52%	7%	0%	0%
b. Board ensures financial soundness and capacity of LEF	36%	36%	17%	12%	0%
c. Board ensures LEF is well-led and managed	36%	52%	12%	0%	0%
d. Board ensures it is adequately representative of community it serves	26%	31%	26%	17%	0%
e. Board advances LEF's work and credibility with constituents	36%	45%	19%	0%	0%
f. Board challenges me in productive ways	31%	48%	19%	2%	0%

[5] The sample size is too small to explore how the racial/ethnic make-up of Boards affects directors' perception of its representativeness when controlling for the percentage of minority students in the districts served by the LEF or for the racial/ethnic background of the director.

[6] Based on 2000 data collected by PEN.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

LEF Executive Director Activities and Skills

Allocation of time

One objective of the baseline survey was to identify how executive directors allocate their time. Respondents were asked to rank eight key activities by the amount of time they typically spent on each across the past year. Results are summarized in the first column of Table 6.

Table 6: Executive Directors' Time Allocation

Activities on which Executive Directors spend their time, on average, ranked from 1 to 8 where 1 is the activity that occupies the majority of their time.

How EDs Currently Spend Their Time	*How EDs Ideally Would Like to Spend Time*
1. Establishing, maintaining district relations	1. Strategic planning
2. Developing programs	2. Developing programs
3. Managing programs	3. Establishing, maintaining district relations
4. Fundraising	4. Talking with the community
5. Talking with the community	5. Board development
6. Organizational management	6. Fundraising
7. Board development	7. Managing programs
8. Strategic planning	8. Organizational management

The top three activities executive directors reported spending time on clearly reflect a key aspect of LEF activity: working with the local school district(s) to develop and implement programs that support education reform. These responses suggest that executive directors are actively engaged in perhaps the most critical work of the LEFs. Although these results are important, they must be explored further, using different research methods. In a study of managers in an academic setting, Hannaway (1989) found that managers viewed their work activities they did as "part of some greater process" that "could not be easily divided into discrete actions for particular outcomes." Furthermore, managers had difficulty answering questions about the purpose of tasks, e.g., whether it was to gather information or to supervise a subordinate: "[M]uch of managerial work is process driven," she wrote, and "most managerial activities have multiple functions that occur simultaneously. For example, a manager might be monitoring, supervising, and problem solving all during one exchange with a subordinate" (p. 46).

Responses to time allocation rankings vary somewhat by executive directors' length of tenure (see Table 7). Those in office for more than four years spend less time establishing or maintaining district relations than newer directors. About 20 percent of all executive directors in the sample identify this as one of their key challenges, and not surprisingly, newer directors are more likely to do so. It makes sense that newer directors focus more on district relations than longer-term directors, given their relative newness to the position. Newer executive directors

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

might spend more time than longer-term executive directors on activities that allow them to establish themselves in the community in their new role as director.

Table 7: Executive Directors' Time Allocation by Tenure

"Newer" Executive Directors	*Longer-standing Executive Directors*
1. Establishing, maintaining district relations	1. Fundraising
2. Developing programs	2. Developing programs
3. Managing programs	3. Establishing, maintaining district relations
4. Fundraising	4. Managing programs
5. Talking with the community	5. Talking with the community
6. Organizational management	6. Organizational management
7. Strategic planning	7. Board development
8. Board development	8. Strategic planning

Actual versus desired time allocation

The baseline survey also asked executive directors to rank the same eight activities in terms of how they ideally would like to spend their time, providing a comparison, captured in Table 6, between *actual* and *desired* time allocation by executive directors. This provided some hints about deeper-level perceptions held by executive directors about their work.

The data reveal that executive directors would ideally like to be spending a good deal of time on two of the top three activities on which they currently spend their time — maintaining district relations, and developing programs. However, they ranked "managing programs" seventh out of eight activities on which they would like to spend time, suggesting that they feel they are spending more time currently than they ought to be on the day-to-day management of programs. This points to possible overextension on the part of executive directors, a precursor to burnout and high turnover (See next section). PEN may be able to serve as a resource for executive directors looking for new, more efficient ways to ensure that effective program management takes place.

Other activities on which executive directors would like to be spending *less* time include fundraising and organizational management. These activities, too, are fundamental to the sustainability of LEFs, yet they are perceived to be taking up more of the executive directors' time than desired.

Executive directors would like to be spending *more* time on several activities, including talking with members of their community, developing their boards, and — most significant — engaging in strategic planning. In fact, executive directors on average reported that although strategic planning is the activity that they spend the *least* amount of time on, relative to other activities, it

is the activity that *ideally*, they would like to spend the *most* time on.[7] Management is replete with writing and discussion about managers' inability to focus on long-term planning because short-term crises ("putting out fires") and day-to-day management take precedence. Particularly in nonprofit organizations, which emphasize "mission delivery," strategic planning will be viewed as a key activity for executive directors (Tschirhart, 1996, in Ott). Furthermore, changes in the nonprofit environment over the last twenty years — including larger client bases, less public-sector funding, regulatory restrictions, and pressures to expand mission — mean "nonprofits and their boards will be 'at sea' if they fail to chart their courses by planning strategically" (Ott, 2001).

The high value placed on strategic planning by LEF executive directors, which is not uncommon among nonprofits, may be related to a growing emphasis on performance measurement for both for- and non-profit organizations, as strategic planning encompasses an evaluation component. Two common results of effective strategic planning relate to evaluation: determination of whether objectives are being met, and establishment of a means to evaluate programs, staff, and resources (Smith, Bucklin, & Associates, 2000).

Overall, then, it is not surprising that executive directors want to spend more time on strategic planning. However, it is significant that this is the activity they feel they are spending the *least* amount of time on currently. It will be important to explore what obstacles exist to effective strategic planning on the part of executive directors. In addition, PEN may be interested in helping LEFs to plan strategically, perhaps through a capacity-building exercise or workshop that ensures that LEF executive directors spend the necessary time on this activity.

Executive directors' perception of required leadership skills

Consistent with their desire to spend more time on strategic planning is LEF executive directors' ranking of the importance of eight skills for effective leadership of their LEF. On average, strategic planning was ranked as the second most important skill for effective LEF leadership. Overall results are summarized in Table 8.

The skill ranked as most important for effective leadership was interpersonal skills. Executive directors reinforced this finding in open-ended responses, with 40 percent indicating that interpersonal/communication skills, and the ability to build relationships, were the most important skills required of an executive director.[8] Most likely, this is due to the extensive time that executive directors spend talking with community members.[9]

---

[7] This finding was consistent for both shorter and longer-term EDs.

[8] Interpersonal/communication skills and the ability to build relationships were collected and organized as two distinct responses to open-ended items. However, it was decided to combine them in reporting because (1) many respondents themselves reported them together as one skill, and (2) for some responses it was difficult to determine whether they would be best classified as communication/interpersonal skills or relationship-building skills.

[9] See the section on community leadership.

Table 8: Perception of Importance of Leadership Skills

Skills for Effective LEF Leadership Ranked in Order of Importance by EDs
1. Interpersonal skills
2. Strategic planning/thinking
3. Programmatic knowledge
4. Evaluating organizational effectiveness
5. Raising money
6. Ability to supervise/manage staff
7. Public speaking
8. Managing money

The emphasis on interpersonal skills has also shown up in previous research. A factor analysis by Stogdill (1974) of 52 studies on leadership, published between 1945 and 1974, found that social and interpersonal skills were among the most frequently identified factors used to describe leaders.

Significantly, of the eight skills listed in the survey item, those rated as less important to effective leadership include "managing money" (eighth), the "ability to supervise/manage staff" (sixth), and "raising money (fifth). Here, too, lies a hint that although executive directors do not see their primary role as day-to-day manager of their LEFs, they are often in this position. In fact, the main challenge executive directors reported facing was fundraising.

Internal Organizational Issues

Time constraints

Burnout is not surprising in nonprofit organizations, often leading to high turnover (Pomerantz, 1991).The 1987 evaluation of the Public Education Fund found that executive directors were exhibiting early signs of "burnout." A number of executive directors in this 2001 sample reported that time constraints presented a challenge for them in their work. Typical responses included: "balancing conflicting demands on my time," "lack of time," "time to do everything that must be done." Executive directors also reported working well over 40 hours per week: on average, they work 52 hours per week; 41 percent reported working 60 hours per week or more (see Table 9).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 9: Average Hours Executive Directors Work per Week

Hours/wk	<30	30-44	45-59	60+
% of EDs	2%	24%	33%	41%

By linking the survey data to data collected by PEN in 1999, we explored the relationship between staff size and the baseline survey findings. According to PEN data, although LEF staff size ranges from 1 to 162, half of the LEFs in the study have a staff of six or less, of which two members, on average, are part-time staff members. The newer the LEF, the more likely it is to have a smaller staff. For instance, 61 percent of LEFs founded after 1987 have a staff of less than six compared to 39 percent of LEFs founded before 1988.[10] In addition, a small number of respondents wrote comments about staffing:

> *The [LEF] is very small. There is only one project director and much to be done organizationally.*
>
> *I work four days per week as there is no money for other staff or time at this point.*
>
> *I am the only staff. This limits the number and type of projects our LEF can take on.*

Significantly, though, executive directors in LEFs with larger staff sizes were *more* likely to report working a *greater* number of hours per week. 89 percent of those with a staff of 12 or more reported working 50 or more hours per week compared to only 11 percent of those with a smaller staff[11]. In addition, executive directors of LEFs with smaller staff sizes spend the most time, on average, managing and developing programs compared to executive directors of LEFs with larger staff. These findings contradict the notion that time constraints experienced by executive directors would be ameliorated by a larger LEF staff. It would be useful, in subsequent study, to investigate this relationship further, particularly to determine whether specific issues affect how executive directors can spend their time.

The 1987 PEF report also suggested that executive director turnover might be on the rise. Not surprising, the majority of LEFs have experienced changes in leadership since this report was released. Only three of the longer-standing LEFs in the sample are led by their original founding directors and, on average, the tenure of executive directors in the sample is five years.[12] One-fourth of the LEFs in the sample have an average executive director tenure of 3.4 years or less.[13]

---

[10] This result is not statistically significant.

[11] This result is not statistically significant.

[12] The median is four, meaning 50 percent have held position for four years or less.

[13] Yet 50 percent of these LEFs were founded in 1998 or later and therefore should not be viewed as having a high turnover, as their EDs could not have had a longer tenure.

Although staff burnout it frequently a problem for nonprofits, not a single executive director reported being dissatisfied with his or her job. In fact, in open-ended survey items, many executive directors described why they enjoyed their work. One wrote that being the executive director was "the most exciting and fulfilling job I have ever had," and that she "can't imagine doing anything else as worthy or satisfying."

The overwhelming majority of executive directors in our sample also report that staff morale is high (see Table 10). Executive directors consistently report positively on their relations with their staff. Over 90 percent report that the staff trust the executive director, although longer-term directors are less likely to report this, and 95 percent indicate that the staff understand their roles and responsibilities (see Table 10).[14] However, these findings are based on the perception of the executive director and may not accurately reflect how staff feel. Future research activities will give us ways to learn more about LEF leadership from the perspective of LEF staff.

Table 10: Perceptions of Staff

	Strongly agree	*Agree*	*Disagree*	*Strongly disagree*	*Don't know*
Staff morale is low.	0%	2%	37%	61%	0%
Staff understand roles.	36%	59%	3%	3%	0%
LEF staff trust the ED.	43%	49%	0%	0%	9%

Executive directors' relationship with their board of directors

The baseline survey sought information about the relationship between executive directors and their boards of directors. A collegial partnership between directors and boards, rather than a hierarchical relationship, is seen as critical to the effectiveness of nonprofit organizations. Such a partnership typically evolves as a nonprofit organization grows.

When asked to characterize their boards' governance style, two-thirds of executive directors described their board as more of a following board — meaning the board usually follows the executive director's lead (see Figure 1).[15] Directors of longer-standing LEFs are more likely to report that their board follows her lead, echoing the 1987 PEF evaluation finding that as LEFs age, board involvement in major areas of the organizations' work decreases and staff and director responsibilities increase[16]. This suggests that a shift in LEF leadership is associated with the natural organizational evolution of non-profits. Leadership of longer-standing LEFs in the sample appears to have moved away from the traditional hierarchical model often associated with nonprofit leadership, either to a collegial model in which the executive director and the

[14] These findings do not show any variation by LEF staff size.

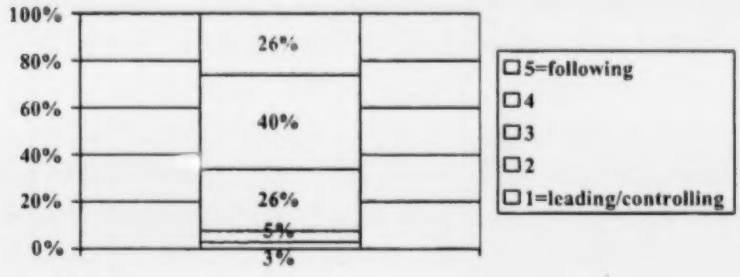
[15] A leading/controlling Board was defined as "in nearly all cases, the board leads the LEF" while a following Board was defined as "in nearly all cases, the board follows the executive director's lead".

[16] 78 percent of executive directors of LEFs founded pre-1988 reported that their board of directors follows her lead (ranked it a four or five) compared to 55 percent of EDs of more recently founded LEFs.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

board share authority evenly, or a slightly more executive director-dominated model, in which the executive director makes key decisions, with the board serving to ratify these decisions.

Figure 1
Executive Directors' Characterization of Their Boards



Although we can draw preliminary conclusions from the survey about the balance of power and distribution of leadership responsibilities between executive directors and their boards, a deeper understanding of these relationships will likely emerge from the case studies.

Regardless of how executive directors characterize their boards' leadership in relation to their own, it is clear from the survey that the majority of executive directors feel their board of directors is executing its responsibilities effectively. For instance, 93 percent report that their board ensures that the LEF stays true to and advances its mission, 88 percent indicate that their board makes certain that the LEF is well-led and managed, and 81 percent maintain that their board advances the organization's work and credibility.

LEF Executive Directors as Community Collaborators

Executive directors' responses to questions about how they spend their time, and what skills they value, suggest that LEF leadership may be best characterized by a community collaboration model. Central to this model is the leader's ability to engage and mobilize the community in collaborative action (Chrislip & Larson, 1994). Collaborative leadership differs from tactical (or heroic) leadership, in which an individual takes charge and achieves very specific objectives, and also from positional leadership, in which a leader guides a structured organization to perform specific tasks. Rather than promoting a particular vision or solution to a problem, the collaborative leader emphasizes how community members can work together. Chrislip & Larson find similarities between this vision of leadership and other longer-standing theories of leadership, including transforming leadership, servant leadership, and leadership as process.

Necessary conditions for effective collaboration in communities include the following, among others:

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- Presence of strong stakeholder groups
- Broad-based involvement
- Credibility and openness of process
- Commitment and/or involvement of high-level, visible leaders
- Support or acquiescence of "established" authorities
- Ability to overcome mistrust and skepticism
- Strong leadership of the process of collaboration, rather than advocacy of a particular point of view

Principles underlying this type of process leadership, as identified through research on over 50 successful collaborative initiatives, include the ability to inspire commitment and action; lead as peer problem solver; and build broad-based involvement.

Although the survey results are mostly impressionistic, they reflect aspects of a collaborative leadership style. For example, 37 percent of executive directors wrote, in an open-ended item, that the ability to build relationships was a key skill required for their work. The majority of executive directors in the sample spend a large portion of their time talking with community members.[17] Much of this talking appears to occur with schools and districts — key constituents for LEFs. In fact, 85 percent of the respondents indicated that they spoke with school or district staff at least weekly (see Figure 2).

Some survey respondents said that process-oriented, collaborative skills were necessary for LEF leadership, including the ability to: effectively community with all segments of the community; work with the school system; inspire others with vision and move the change forward; and work with diverse groups who play varying roles in the community.

Over 80 percent of executive directors in the sample also reported speaking with community members, and over 70 percent reported talking with business leaders and non-profit leaders, respectively, at least every two weeks (see Figure 2).[18] About half the sample indicated that they talk with each of the following groups at least every two weeks also: local or state political leaders, local foundation/grantmaking staff, and parents. Interestingly, 40 percent reported speaking with parents at least weekly. Furthermore, a key challenge facing LEFs in the next ten years, according to respondents, will be engaging community stakeholders in education reform, and executive directors report engaging the public in reform as one of the top four challenges they face as leaders. Similarly, effective community engagement is the third most commonly cited challenge directors foresee for their LEF over the next ten years. Thus, the work of the executive director clearly involves — and will continue to involve — a deep level of interaction and work with the community.

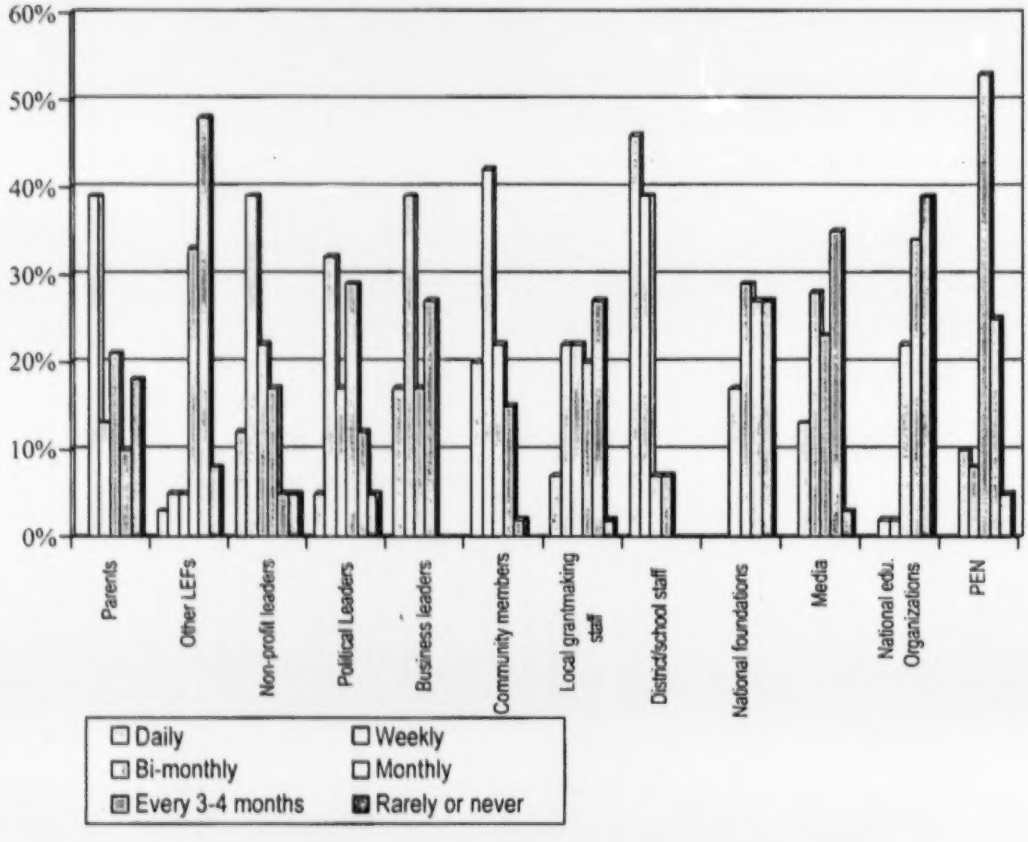
Although the survey data provide insight into how frequently executive directors talk with various members of the community, further research could elucidate exactly why executive

[17] Establishing/maintaining district relations and talking with the community were ranked in the top four of eight activities on which EDs spend the most of their time.

[18] 100 percent of the EDs in the sample reported collaborating with other third-party organizations.

directors find community engagement challenging, how this affects their LEFs work, and how executive directors of different length of tenure devise strategies to overcome this challenge.[19]

Figure 2: Frequency with which Executive Directors Talk with the Following Groups



Significantly, Chrislip & Larson (1994) indicate that in community collaborations, the primary focus of leadership needs to be on the *process* of how people work together to solve problems, and not on the content of the problem itself (63-64). Collaborative leaders value safeguarding the process of collaboration more than finding particular solutions to problems. They even go so far as to suggest that subject expertise, a capability identified as the third most important leadership skill by respondents (called "programmatic knowledge" in the baseline survey), may be less important than the ability to collaborate effectively for these leaders. Such a hypothesis should be tested further in interviews with LEF executive directors as part of this study.

[19] It is also of interest to explore how community engagement challenges differ for LEFs serving multiple districts, especially if these districts represent different communities.

Community-building organizations are more flexible, smaller, and less bureaucratic than school and school district bureaucracies — a potential source of tension in collaborative efforts (Jehl, Blank, & McCloud, 2001). However, the majority of executive directors in our sample reported that their LEFs' vision of education is somewhat or very similar to that of the district(s) they serve (see Figure 3). Additionally, 90 percent agreed that their LEF is a "critical friend" of the district(s) served (see Figure 4).

Figure 3: Similarity of Vision of Education

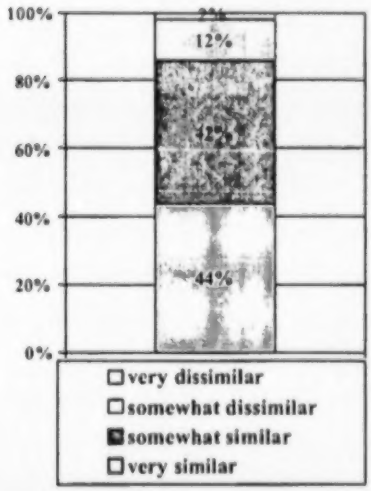
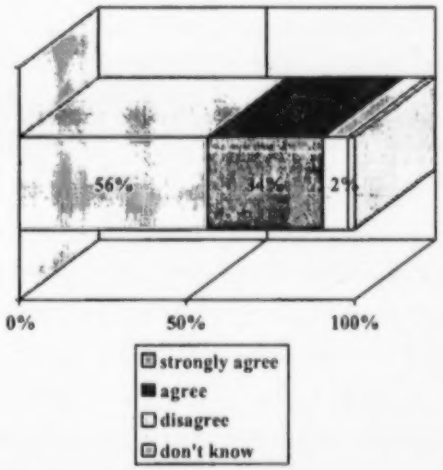


Figure 4: LEF is "Critical Friend" of District



Conclusions

This baseline survey revealed consensus among LEF executive directors on their leadership values and key challenges. This suggests that the LEF model is fairly consistent across a variety of contexts.

In executive director-driven organizations such as LEFs, leadership involves collaboration with the larger community, as well as internal management of the LEF itself. Survey results indicate that executive directors do indeed see themselves as primary actors in the main work of the LEFs. They build relationships, talk to community members, and work directly with the school system. Executive directors would like to spend less time on daily management and fundraising challenges, and more time on the more visionary role of strategic planner.[20] Community collaboration would require this latter type of leadership.

[20] Because strategic planning can include the development of performance indicators to measure progress of the LEF, this finding may reflect the trend toward greater accountability in the nonprofit sector over the last ten years.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Another key finding in this analysis is that nearly all respondents indicated a high level of satisfaction with their job and their compensation — this despite reports of very high numbers of hours dedicated to their work. It will be important, in the remaining research activities for this study, to explore with executive directors whether they are in danger of "burning out," a possibility suggested by the 1987 evaluation of LEFs (Haas, et al.). Furthermore, LEF staff and community response to the LEF executive directors would help PEN understand LEF leadership tremendously.

Another important finding is that executive directors with longer tenure differ in their demographics, priorities, and perceived challenges than executive directors who have held their jobs for fewer years. Longer-term executive directors appear to focus less on establishing district relations than newer executive directors, and newer executive directors are more likely to talk more frequently with local foundations. Yet overall, longer-term executive directors spend more time on fundraising than newer executive directors. Simply being new to the executive director position might create a need for directors to emphasize activities that allow them to establish themselves in their new role.

Several implications emerge from this preliminary investigation. These address the areas of civic capacity building in general, leadership development within LEFs and throughout PEN, and questions for further consideration and study. Each is described below.

Implications for Civic Capacity Building

LEFs do not accomplish their work in a vacuum. In fact, these survey results suggest that LEF leaders are intimately involved in the fundamental community building that is part of their mission. Thus, LEFs are invested in encouraging the conditions needed for community collaboration and action. The concept of "public capital," developed by The Harwood Group (1996), describes the "capacities, relationships, networks and linkages" that facilitate effective community action. This concept, meant to encompass a broader array of dimensions than "social capital" (Coleman, 1988), may well hold promise as a key to understanding the terrain in which LEFs flourish. Factors contributing to the public capital system include the presence of community norms and a shared purpose, factors that inhere at least partly in the community itself, emerging from its history. Other factors, such as numerous social gatherings, deliberate community dialogue, and informal networks and links, may well be the product of a civic capacity building throughout the community, and over time. The relationship between the public schools and public capital appears particularly strong, and worthy of further study as a corollary to any study of LEF effectiveness.

In addition, LEF leadership is likely to be a strong factor in the development of public capital. LEFs and their leaders contribute to almost all of the nine factors identified by Harwood (1996) as part of public capital, particularly the presence of catalytic organizations, strong leadership, informal networks and links, and community discussion.

A second implication for civic capacity building is the fact that executive directors tend to be white and of middle to high income, despite the more diverse demographics of the communities served by their LEFs. PEN survey results show a similar misalignment between the composition of boards of directors and the communities served by LEFs. Although this homogeneity is a common problem among nonprofits, it may be particularly important for LEFs and PEN to address, as LEFs claim to represent a community response to the need for better schools.

Implications for Leadership Development

These survey results indicated some differences between newer and longer-term LEF executive directors. Newer executive directors are more likely to be male and to live outside of the community served by their LEF. Furthermore, they have slightly higher educational attainment, more experience in educational settings, and less experience in nonprofits. They spend more time focusing on district relations and talking to local foundations, and less time overall on fundraising.

PEN staff have also suggested that a small number of the newest executive directors have a stronger business background, and appear to be operating their LEFs in a more competitive manner. This is in keeping with changes in the nonprofit world, including scarce funding, stiffer competition, and a stronger emphasis on achieving outcomes. PEN will want to consider these differences when thinking about how to nurture LEF leadership. What worked fifteen years ago may not be relevant in today's environment.

In addition to differences among executive directors, the LEFs themselves are in different stages of development. According to nonprofit management consultants, "Organizations move through distinguishable life cycles — or stages of development — as they mature and grow. Each stage requires a different management style and organizational structure" (Gross, Mathiasen, & Franco, 1998). The four most common stages for nonprofit organizations include: informal, structured, decentralized, and consolidated. The transition through each of these stages brings new challenges to nonprofit leaders. It may be useful to LEF executive directors to learn more about this developmental process.

Organizational development also has implications for boards of directors. As nonprofit organizations develop through their organizational stages, their boards of directors also mature. Mathiasen (1990) suggests that boards pass through three developmental stages, moving from an organizing board of directors, to a volunteer governing board, to an institutional board. The degree of authority wielded by the board is also relevant to their growth. A significant 26 percent of our survey respondents indicated that their boards were completely "following." This may suggest a need, on the part of executive directors, for increased understanding of how to develop a board's autonomy. An important aspect of LEF leadership will be the executive director's ability to work effectively with his or her board.

Finally, PEN can consider taking a leadership role in helping executive directors spend the time needed to lay the groundwork for effective strategic planning. A workshop or conference could

provide a secure time for such work. PEN may also wish to explore how it can help executive directors spend less time on day-to-day management of programs without sacrificing the quality of such programming.

Questions for Further Consideration

Overall, we found a large degree of consensus among executive directors about the key skills needed to lead an LEF effectively. The next step in our study will be to understand in greater detail how these skills are exercised. The following questions remain:

- *What style of leadership is exhibited by LEF executive directors?* This survey provided more information about the "outward" focus of leadership in the community than about executive directors' leadership style and habits. However, PEN will want to consider further research to better understand internal LEF management, a challenging responsibility shouldered by LEF leaders (Useem, 1999).

- *Is the fact that executive directors are spending an average of 52 hours per week on their jobs a problem?* Although we know that LEFs have small staff sizes, it is not yet clear whether a larger staff would ameliorate the large number of hours executive directors spend working. Our survey results indicate that LEFs with larger staff work even longer hours than those with smaller staff. In addition, although we might speculate that long hours could lead to burnout and high turnover, executive directors reported extremely high job satisfaction. Further study is needed to understand how executive directors feel about the time they spend on their jobs.

- *What obstacles cause executive directors to spend more time than desired on management, and less time than desired on strategic planning?* Our survey results suggest that LEF executive directors would like to be allocating their time differently, but is that possible? If so, what obstacles would need to be removed? Have any executive directors been able to allocate their time more favorably? Answers to these questions would be extremely beneficial for LEF leadership development. PEN may also wish to develop methods for helping LEFs to manage their programs.

- *What exactly do executive directors mean by "strategic planning"?* Pilot-testing of the survey suggested that "strategic planning" may be interpreted differently by different respondents. More in-depth study is needed to learn what executive directors want to be doing, and how they currently accomplish it given their time constraints. Also, as mentioned, PEN may wish to assist executive directors in better strategic planning.

- *Do executive directors focus on the process of collaboration, and do they see it as a critical aspect of LEF leadership?* Chrislip & Larson (1994) suggest that leaders of effective community-based organizations emphasize the process of collaboration as much as the specific goals and objectives of their mission. Is this true, and if so, how do executive directors do so? It is possible that LEF executive directors have a good deal of knowledge

about how to engage the public. If they lack such knowledge, resources may exist that could be useful in leadership development.

- *Why are multiple LEFs emerging in the same communities, and is this a problem?* Respondents were given the opportunity to write any additional comments on the survey. Two described the existence of another LEF serving the same districts they serve. Their comments were somewhat alarming:

  > *This is a new LEF in a community (a) already served by an LEF that has created no meaningful improvement (we think we have a better idea), (b) that doesn't have much of a history of civic engagement and collaboration, and (c) has a dearth(?) of effective civic leaders.*
  >
  > *Having more than one LEF in the city amplifies difficult district relationships.*

  It would be useful to explore reasons for the development of multiple LEFs in one area, and the implications for LEF leaders.

Bibliography

Chrislip, David D., & Larson, Carl E. (1994). ***Collaborative Leadership: How Citizens and Civic Leaders Can Make a Difference***. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Coleman, James S. (1988). "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital." ***American Journal of Sociology***. Volume 94. Issue Supplement: Organizations and Institutions: Sociological and Economic Approaches to the Analysis of Social Structure. S95-S120.

Hannaway, Jane. (1989). ***Managers Managing: The Workings of an Administrative System***. New York: Oxford University Press.

The Harwood Group. (1996). ***Public Capital: The Dynamic System That Makes Public Life Work***. Prepared for the Kettering Foundation.

Jehl, Jeanne, Blank, Martin J., & McCloud, Barbara. (2001). ***Education and Community Building: Connecting Two Worlds***. Washington, DC: The Institute for Educational Leadership.

Gross, Susan, Mathiasen, Karl, & Franco, Nancy. (1998). "Organizational Life Cycles." ***MAGNews***, newsletter of the Management Assistance Group. Summer. Washington, DC: Management Assistance Group.

Mathiasen, III, Karl. (1990). ***Board Passages: Three Key Stages in a Nonprofit Board's Life Cycle***. Washington, DC: National Center for Nonprofit Boards.

Nanus, Burt, & Dobbs, Stephen M. (1999). ***Leaders Who Make a Difference: Essential Strategies for Meeting the Nonprofit Challenge***. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Newmann, Fred M., & Wehlage, Gary G. (1995). ***Successful School Restructuring: A Report to the Public and Educators by the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools***. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin.

Ott, Steven J. (2001). ***Understanding Nonprofit Organizations: Governance, Leadership, and Management***. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Petrovich, Janice. (2001). "LEFs: A Proud History of Evolving To Meet Challenges." ***Connections***, Volume 8, No. 1.

Pomerantz, Steven D. (1991). "Predictive Indicators of Job Burnout in Nonprofit Organizations." Working Paper 15. Institute for Nonprofit Organization Management. San Francisco: University of San Francisco.

Porter, Andrew, & Osthoff, Eric. (1993). ***External Strategies for Stimulating and Supporting School Restructuring***. Report prepared for the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Center for Education Research, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

The Public Education Network. (2000). "The Public Education Network Theory of Action." Presented at the PEN Annual Conference, November, 2000.

Puriefoy, Wendy D. (2001). "Local Education Funds: Powerful Partnerships for Public Schools." In ***Constituency Building and Advocacy for Education Reform: A Collection of Seminar Papers***. Convened June 24-25, 1999. New York: The Open Society Institute.

Smith, Bucklin & Associates. (2000). ***The Complete Guide to Nonprofit Management***. (Second Edition). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Stogdill, Ralph M. (1974). ***Handbook of Leadership: A Survey of Theory and Research***. New York: The Free Press.

Tschirhart, Mary (1996). "Artful Leadership." In Ott, ***Understanding Nonprofit Organizations*** (2001). Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 120-130.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Under Secretary and Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. (January, 2001). ***School Improvement Report: Executive Order on Actions for Turning Around Low-Performing Schools***. Washington, DC: Author.

Useem, Elizabeth. (1999). ***From the Margins to the Center of School Reform: A Look at the Work of Local Education Funds in Seventeen Communities***. Washington, DC: Public Education Network.

APPENDIX A

Survey Instrument

LOCAL EDUCATION FUND
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SURVEY

THE URBAN INSTITUTE

All responses to this survey will be kept strictly confidential. No information that you provide on this questionnaire that might individually identify you or your LEF will be shared with anyone outside the Urban Institute research group. Your participation is voluntary.

Please return your completed questionnaire by mail to:

Alissa Anderson
The Urban Institute
Education Policy Center
2100 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

Or by fax: (202) 833-2477

If you have any questions, please call or email Ms. Anderson
(202) 261-5682 or Aanderso@ui.urban.org.

1. Are you the executive director (or the equivalent) of this LEF? If you are an interim or acting director, please check "No."

   ❒ Yes ⟶ If yes, please proceed to question 2.

   ❒ No ⟶ If no, please do not complete this survey. Please return it in its enclosed envelope.

About Your LEF

2. In what year was your LEF founded? _____

3. Since its inception, how many executive directors has this LEF had, ***including*** yourself? _____ executive directors

4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
a. LEF staff morale is low.....	1	2	3	4	5
b. All staff members understand their roles and responsibilities.....	1	2	3	4	5
c. The staff trust and respect me.....	1	2	3	4	5
d. Board member morale is low.....	1	2	3	4	5
e. The LEF is carrying out its mission effectively	1	2	3	4	5
f. The LEF is a "critical friend" of the school district(s) it serves.....	1	2	3	4	5

Executive Director Roles and Responsibilities

5. In a ***typical week***, how many hours do you work as executive director both inside and outside the office? _____ hours/week

6. The following is a list of activities on which you likely spend time as executive director of this LEF. ***Thinking across the past year*** (or the part for which you have been executive director), please rank the following activities by how much time ***you personally spent*** on them.

   1 indicates "I spent the largest portion of my time this year on this activity,"
   2 indicates "I spent the second largest portion of my time this year on this activity," and so on...

   Rank all eight

   ___ Strategic planning

   ___ Board development

   ___ Managing/monitoring existing programs and initiatives

   ___ Developing new programs and initiatives

   ___ Development/fundraising

   ___ Establishing/maintaining relationship with schools/district(s)

   ___ Talking with the community (excluding schools/district(s))

   ___ Organizational management

7. Please rank the following activities by how much time you would ***ideally*** like to spend on them as LEF executive director. Consider what you believe would contribute most to effective leadership and impact of your LEF — ***not*** what you may actually do.

   1 indicates "I would spend the largest portion of my time on this activity,"
   2 indicates "I would spend the second largest portion of my time on this activity," and so on...

   Rank all eight

   ___ Strategic planning

   ___ Board development

   ___ Managing/monitoring existing programs and initiatives

   ___ Developing new programs and initiatives

   ___ Development/fundraising

   ___ Establishing/maintaining relationship with schools/district(s)

   ___ Talking with the community (excluding schools/district(s))

   ___ Organizational management

8. Please indicate the frequency with which you typically talk to each of the following groups or people (***excluding your board of director members***).

	Daily	At least weekly	At least every 2 weeks	At least monthly	At least every 3-4 months	Rarely or never
a. Parents	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. Other local education funds	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. Local nonprofit organization leaders (other than LEF directors)	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. Local or state political leaders (e.g., school board members)	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. Local business leaders	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. Local community members	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. Local foundation/grantmaking institution staff	1	2	3	4	5	6
h. District/school staff	1	2	3	4	5	6
i. National foundations/corporations	1	2	3	4	5	6
j. Media	1	2	3	4	5	6
k. National education organizations (e.g., Institute for Educational Leadership, Nat'l Education Association)	1	2	3	4	5	6
l. PEN	1	2	3	4	5	6

9. How would you rate your overall job satisfaction?

Circle one number.

Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
1	2	3	4

10. What do you think are the ***two*** most important skills a new executive director ***of your LEF*** would need?

1. _____
   _____

2. _____
   _____

11. The following is a list of leadership skills. Some skills may be more important than others for effective leadership. Please rank the skills by their importance to *effective leadership **of your LEF***. (1 indicates that it is the most important, 2 the second most important, and so on.)

Rank all eight

___ Strategic planning/thinking

___ Interpersonal skills

___ Raising money

___ Managing money

___ Public speaking

___ Ability to supervise and manage staff

___ Programmatic knowledge/expertise (e.g., district budget, education reform)

___ Evaluating/monitoring organizational effectiveness

12. Please indicate how often ***in a year*** (or the part for which you have been executive director) you typically do the following:

	At least once per day	At least once per week	At least twice per month	At least once per month	At least a few times per year	At least once per year	Never
a. Read literature relevant to your position or your LEF's work (e.g., leadership, education reform).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. Communicate with or visit other LEFs or LEF directors.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. Attend PEN conferences.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d. Attend other work-related conferences.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e. Participate in other professional development activities (e.g., working with a consultant, taking a class).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f. Offer professional development opportunities to your staff or board.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

13. Please use this scale to characterize your board.

Circle one number.

Leading/ controlling board *In nearly all cases, the board leads the LEF.*				**Following board** *In nearly all cases, the board follows the executive director's lead.*
1	2	3	4	5

14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your board of directors?

The board…	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. ensures that the LEF stays true to and advances its mission	1	2	3	4	5
b. ensures the financial soundness and capacity of the LEF	1	2	3	4	5
c. ensures that the LEF is well-led and managed	1	2	3	4	5
d. ensures that the board is adequately representative of the community it serves	1	2	3	4	5
e. advances the LEF's work and credibility with constituents	1	2	3	4	5
f. challenges me in productive ways	1	2	3	4	5

15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. There are enough local businesses in this community from which to draw support for this LEF.	1	2	3	4
b. There is large body of potential volunteers (e.g., retired persons, college students) in this community from which to draw volunteers for this LEF.	1	2	3	4

16. What are the ***two*** most important challenges you face as an LEF executive director?

1. _____
   _____

2. _____
   _____

17. What do you see as ***two*** most important challenges LEFs will face over the next ten years?

1. _____
   _____

2. _____
   _____

18. Using the scale below, please indicate to what extent you believe the executive director is responsible for or contributes to your LEF's sustainability.

Circle one number.

Great extent	Moderate extent	Little extent	Not at all
1	2	3	4

Community/District Characteristics

19. Does your LEF serve one or more than one district?
    ❒ Only one district ❒ More than one district

20. Please list the formal name(s) of the district(s) your LEF serves. *If your LEF serves more than six districts, please attach a list of the district names to this survey.*

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

21. Please indicate the total number of students in all of the districts served by your LEF: _____ students

22. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. Teacher turnover is a problem in the school district(s) served by this LEF.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Leadership turnover is a problem in the school district(s) served by this LEF.	1	2	3	4	5

23. Please rate how similar your LEF's vision of education is to that of the district(s) served by your LEF. *If your LEF serves more than one district, try to generalize across all of them or those with which you work most often.*

Circle one number.

Very similar	Somewhat similar	Somewhat different	Very different
1	2	3	4

24. Does your LEF collaborate with other third-party organizations serving the same district(s) as your LEF (e.g., nonprofit organizations, alliances, coalitions)?

❒ Yes ❒ No

24a. If yes, please indicate whether the level of collaboration between your LEF and other third-party organizations is sufficient:

Our LEF:

- ❒ Should collaborate a lot more
- ❒ Should collaborate a little more
- ❒ Collaborates enough
- ❒ Should collaborate a little less
- ❒ Should collaborate a lot less

Executive Director Background

25. For approximately how many years have you been the director of this LEF? *If less than one year, please write the number of months for which you've been the director.*

_____ years (OR _____ months)

26. Please indicate whether you ever held a ***paid*** professional position in any of the following areas (***excluding*** your current position):

Education	❒ No	❒ Yes
Nonprofit	❒ No	❒ Yes

26a. If yes, please check if you were a/an:

i. Teacher	❒ Yes	❒ No
ii. Administrator	❒ Yes	❒ No

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

27. Do you live in the attendance area for the district(s) served by your LEF?

❒ Yes ❒ No

27a. If yes, for how many years have you lived in the attendance area for the district(s) served by the LEF for which you work? _____ years

28. What is your gender? ❒ Female ❒ Male

29. What is your age? _____

30. With which racial/ethnic group(s) do you identify?

Check all that apply

❒ African-American/Black
❒ American-Indian or Alaska Native
❒ Asian/Pacific Islander
❒ Hispanic
❒ White
❒ Other

31. What is the ***highest*** degree you have attained?

❒ Bachelor's Degree
❒ Master's Degree
❒ Doctorate or other professional degree
❒ Other: _____

32. What is your current salary ?

❒ $10,000-$20,000
❒ $20,001-$30,000
❒ $30,001-$40,000
❒ $40,001-$50,000
❒ $50,001-$60,000
❒ $60,001-$70,000
❒ $70,001-$80,000
❒ $80,001-$90,000
❒ $90,001-$100,000
❒ $100,000 or more

33. Using the following scale, please indicate how satisfied you are with your current salary.

Circle one number.

Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
1	2	3	4

34. Please write the name of your LEF:

_____

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Please write anything you think we ought to know about you or your LEF to better understand your role as executive director.

Thank you very much for taking the time to fill out this survey. Please return it in its enclosed envelope to: Alissa Anderson, The Urban Institute, Education Policy Center, 2100 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037.

If you have any questions, please call or email Ms. Anderson at (202) 261-5682 or Aanderso@ui.urban.org.

APPENDIX B

Survey Findings

All results reported here exclude missing data. Respondents who reported not being the executive director were excluded from the analyses. Some question stems have been shortened. For full question stems, please see Appendix A.

1. Are you the executive director?		Yes			No	
	Percent	71%			3%	
	Number	42			2	
2. In what year was your LEF founded?	'79-'83	'84-'88	'89-'93		'94-'98	'99-'00
	14%	41%	18%		17%	10%
3. How many EDs has your LEF had?		1	2	3	4	5
	Percent	34%	32%	12%	15%	7%
	Number	14	13	5	6	3
4. To what extent do you agree?		*SA=Strongly agree, A=Agree, DK=Don't know, D=Disagree, SD= Strongly disagree*				
		SA	A	DK	D	SD
a. LEF staff morale is low.						
	Percent	0%	2%	0%	37%	61%
	Number	0	1	0	15	25
b. All staff understand responsibilities.						
	Percent	36%	59%	0%	3%	2%
	Number	14	23	0	1	1
c. The staff trust and respect me.						
	Percent	43%	49%	8%	0%	0%
	Number	15	17	3	0	0
d. Board member morale is low.						
	Percent	0%	2%	3%	33%	62%
	Number	0	1	1	14	26
e. LEF carrying out mission effectively.						
	Percent	41%	57%	0%	2%	0%
	Number	17	24	0	1	0
f. LEF is critical friend of district(s).						
	Percent	56%	34%	3%	7%	0%
	Number	23	14	1	3	0
5. How many hours / week do you work?		<30	30-44		45-59	60-70
		2%	24%		33%	41%

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

6. How much time do you spend on…		*1-8, where 1 is largest portion of time*
	Mean Rank	Ranked Results
a. Strategic planning	5.80	8
b. Board development	5.49	7
c. Managing existing programs	3.70	3
d. Developing new programs	3.43	2
e. Fundraising	3.79	4
f. Establishing district relations	3.36	1
g. Talking with community	4.90	5
h. Organizational management	5.13	6

7. How much time would you like to…		*1-8, where 1 is largest portion of time*
	Mean Rank	Ranked Results
a. Strategic planning	3.32	1
b. Board development	4.65	5
c. Managing existing programs	5.44	7
d. Developing new programs	3.37	2
e. Fundraising	5.22	6
f. Establishing district relations	3.70	3
g. Talking with community	3.83	4
h. Organizational management	6.27	8

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

8. How frequently do you talk with...*		Daily to weekly	1-2 / month	3-4 / month or rarely
a. Parents				
	Percent	39%	33%	28%
	Number	15	13	11
b. Other LEFs				
	Percent	7%	38%	55%
	Number	3	15	22
c. Local nonprofit organizations				
	Percent	51%	39%	10%
	Number	21	16	4
d. Local/state political leaders				
	Percent	37%	46%	17%
	Number	15	19	7
e. Local business leaders				
	Percent	55%	45%	0%
	Number	23	18	0
f. Local community leaders				
	Percent	61%	37%	2%
	Number	25	15	1
g. Local foundation/grantmaking staff				
	Percent	29%	42%	29%
	Number	12	17	12
h. District/school staff				
	Percent	85%	15%	0%
	Number	35	6	0
i. National foundations				
	Percent	0%	46%	54%
	Number	0	19	22
j. Media				
	Percent	12%	50%	38%
	Number	5	20	15
k. National education organizations				
	Percent	2%	25%	63%
	Number	1	10	30
l. PEN				
	Percent	10%	60%	30%
	Number	4	24	12

*Responses have been aggregated.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

9. Rate your job satisfaction.		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dis-satisfied	Very dis-sansfied
	Percent	41%	59%	0%	0%
	Number	17	24	0	0

10. Most important ED skills	*Write-in responses*	
	Ability to build relationships	37%
	Programmatic knowledge	11%
	Fundraising	10%

11. Effective leadership skills		*1-8, where 1 is most important*
	Mean Rank	Ranked Response
a. Strategic planning/thinking	2.88	2
b. Interpersonal skills	2.41	1
c. Raising money	4.56	5
d. Managing money	6.32	8
e. Public speaking	5.49	7
f. Ability to supervise/manage staff	5.39	6
g. Programmatic knowledge	4.27	3
h. Evaluation of organization	4.41	4

12. How typically in a year do you...*		At least weekly	At least monthly	At least yearly	Never
a. Read literature relevant to work	Percent	90%	10%	0%	0%
	Number	37	4	0	0
b. Communicate with other LEFs	Percent	3%	29%	61%	7%
	Number	1	12	25	3
c. Attend PEN conferences	Percent	0%	0%	83%	17%
	Number	0	0	33	7
d. Attend other work conferences	Percent	2%	10%	88%	0%
	Number	1	4	36	0
e. Participate in professional devel.	Percent	2%	30%	65%	3%
	Number	1	12	26	1
f. Offer professional devel. to staff	Percent	2%	33%	63%	2%
	Number	1	13	25	1

*Responses have been aggregated.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

13. How would you characterize your board?	Number	*Where 1= leading, 5= following*				
		1	2	3	4	5
	Percent	3%	5%	26%	40%	26%
	Number	1	2	10	15	10

14. To what extent do you agree…		*SA=strongly agree, A=agree, N= neutral, D=disagree, SD=strongly disagree*				
		SA	A	N	D	SD
a. Board ensures LEF stays true to and advances mission	Percent	41%	52%	7%	0%	0%
	Number	17	22	3	0	0
b. Board ensures financial soundness and capacity of LEF	Percent	36%	36%	17%	11%	0%
	Number	15	15	7	5	0
c. Board ensures LEF is well-led and managed	Percent	36%	52%	12%	0%	0%
	Number	15	22	5	0	0
d. Board ensures it is adequately representative of community it serves	Percent	26%	31%	26%	17%	0%
	Number	11	13	11	7	0
e. Board advances LEF's work and credibility with constituents	Percent	36%	45%	20%	0%	0%
	Number	15	19	8	0	0
f. Board challenges me in productive ways	Percent	31%	48%	19%	2%	0%
	Number	13	20	8	1	0

15. To what extent do you agree…		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. There are enough local businesses from which to draw support for LEF	Percent	25%	60%	13%	2%
	Number	10	24	5	1
b. There is a large body of potential volunteers from which to draw support	Percent	28%	64%	8%	0%
	Number	11	25	3	0

16. Top 2 challenges facing ED	*Write-in responses*	
	Securing new funding sources	30%
	Relations with district, other key players	19%

17. Top 2 challenges facing LEF	*Write-in responses*	
	Funding issues, resources, sustainability	38%
	Ensuring effectiveness of LEF work	14%

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

18. ED contributes to LEF sustainability		Great extent	Moderate extent	Little extent	Not at all
	Percent	76%	24%	0%	0%
	Number	32	10	0	0
19. Does LEF serve 1 or more districts?		One		More than one	
	Percent	71%		29%	
	Number	30		12	
20. Names of districts served		*N/A*			
21. Total number of students in districts		2000-30,000	31,000-60,000	61,000-90,000	91,000+
		24%	28%	17%	31%
22. To what extent do you agree…		*SA=strongly agree, A=agree, N= neutral, D=disagree, SD=strongly disagree*			
		SA	A	N	D	SD
a. Teacher turnover is a problem in the district(s) served by this LEF.	Percent	43%	38%	3%	14%	2%
	Number	18	16	1	6	1
b. Leadership turnover is a problem in the district(s) served by this LEF.	Percent	41%	29%	17%	9%	4%
	Number	17	12	7	4	2
23. Similarity of vision of education…		Very similar	Some-what similar	Some-what different	Very different	
	Percent	44%	42%	12%	2%	
	Number	18	17	5	1	
24. Collaborate with third-party orgs?		Yes		No		
	Percent	100%		0%		
	Number	42		0		
24a. Degree of collaboration sufficient?	*LEF should collaborate…*	A lot more	A little more	Enough	A little less	A lot less
	Percent	12%	54%	32%	2%	0%
	Number	5	22	13	1	0
25. Number of years as ED of this LEF		<3	3-5.9	6-9.9	10+	
		37%	19%	24%	20%	

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

26. Have you ever worked in education?		Yes		No	
	Percent	74%		25	
	Number	26%		9	
26a. Have you ever worked as a teacher?		Yes		No	
	Percent	68%		32%	
	Number	13		6	
26a. Have you ever worked as an administrator?		Yes		No	
	Percent	81%		19%	
	Number	21		5	
27. Do you live in attendance area?		Yes		No	
	Percent	76%		24%	
	Number	31		10	
27a. How many years lived in attnd. area		<15	15-29	30-44	45+
		20%	37%	10%	33%
28. Gender		Female		Male	
	Percent	88%		12%	
	Number	36		5	
29. Age		<45	45-54	55-64	65+
		17%	49%	29%	5%
30. Race/ethnicity		African-American		White	Other
	Percent	7%		85%	8%
	Number	3		35	3
31. Highest degree		BA	MA	Ph.D.	Other
	Percent	32%	32%	32%	6%
	Number	13	13	13	2
32. Current salary		<$40,000		$40,001-$60,000	
		17%		27%	
		$60,001-$80,000		$80,001+	
		19%		37%	

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

33. Salary satisfaction		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dis-satisfied	Very dis-satisfied
	Percent	23%	70%	7%	0%
	Number	9	28	3	0

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

[X] This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

[ ] This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").